DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 977 JC 020 594

AUTHOR	Wilson, Cynthia, Ed.
TITLE	Leadership Abstracts, 2001.
INSTITUTION	League for Innovation in the Community Coll.
SPONS AGENCY	Systems & Computer Technology Corp., Malvern, PA.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	18p.; For volume 13, see JC 020 595.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.league.org/leadabst.html.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Leadership Abstracts; v14 n1-4 Feb-Aug 2001
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; *Bachelors Degrees; *Black Students; *Community Colleges; Degrees (Academic); *Developmental Studies Programs; Financial Support; Fund Raising; Institutional Cooperation; *Males; Minority Groups; Remedial Instruction; Remedial Programs; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

This is volume 14 of Leadership Abstracts, a newsletter published by the League for Innovation (California). Issue 1 of February 2001, "Developmental Education: A Policy Primer," discusses developmental programs in the community college. According to the article, community college trustees and presidents would serve their constituents well by focusing more attention on developmental education. Issue 2 of April 2001, "An Open Door to the Bachelor's Degree," argues for the dismantling of local, state, and federal barriers to offering the bachelor's degree in applied arts and sciences at community colleges. Widespread access to higher education is critical to the economic health and social welfare of the country, and the community college is a logical option for increased access. Issue 3 of June 2001, "Brother-to-Brother: Enhancing the Intellectual and Personal Growth of African American Males," explores a special program at St. Petersburg College (Florida) that helps African-American males identify and overcome common and significant stumbling blocks to college entrance and academic success. Issue 4 of August 2001, "Building Your Foundation," examines the challenges of building a community college foundation. (NB)

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ED 467 977

Leadership Abstracts, 2001

Cynthia Wilson, Editor

Leadership Abstracts v14 n1-4 Feb-Aug 2001
The League for Innovation

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Leadership Abstracts

February 2001 Volume 14, Number 1

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION: A POLICY PRIMER

Robert H. McCabe

Few educational programs are more misunderstood and less appreciated than community college developmental education. Both legislatures and colleges afford it a low priority, yet it is essential to our nation's well being. Developmental education can be cost effective and productive, and it is easily one of the most important services provided by community colleges. With these high-yield programs already established in most community colleges, the question to ask may be, "Why aren't we paying more attention to developmental education?" As institutions examine ways to better meet the needs of their communities, community college trustees and presidents would serve their constituents well by focusing on developmental education programs. This abstract reviews the need for developmental education and the success of developmental education programs in community colleges. It concludes with steps trustees and presidents can take to ensure that developmental education is a priority at their institutions.

Developmental Education: A Growing Need for a Changing Nation

America is in a period of amazing change. We enjoy unprecedented prosperity and wondrous technology. Yet on the cusp of a new century, with all the opportunities and advancements, our nation still faces daunting challenges. To remain competitive in the global economy, we must reverse the growth of what seems to be a permanent underclass and we must develop a highly skilled workforce. The task of raising the competencies of our citizens falls on the educational system, and community colleges have a particularly important role. They educate the most deficient students, those who would otherwise be lost to our society, and prepare them for employment and personal advancement.

In his inaugural address, President Bush described the grandest of our ideals as the promise "that everyone belongs, that everyone deserves a chance, that no insignificant person was ever born." That belief in the value of every human being and the commitment to fully develop the talents of all of our citizens sets us apart from other nations. It is our greatest strength, and in the information-rich America of the 21st Century, fulfilling that commitment demands universal access to postsecondary education. It redefines the mission of American education, and it can be achieved through reinvention of the K-12 system and effective community college developmental and remedial education.

Business, Industry, and Work. In the global economy, business and industry operate wherever costs are lowest, and the trend among manufacturers moving from the U.S. to countries with lower wage structures is expected to continue. Sustaining America's future will depend on innovations in the knowledge industries and on developing a more productive workforce. Brainpower and technology can multiply individual productivity to compensate for our higher wages and help America retain economic leadership. The countries that remain competitive in the 21st Century will be those with the highest

overall literacy and educational levels and those with a strong bottom third of the population, such as Germany and Japan.

The workplace of tomorrow will be quite different from that of today-the result of both revolutionary and evolutionary changes. Revolutionary changes will occur as new jobs require markedly different and higher competencies. Existing jobs will continue to evolve, requiring different behaviors and job skills from those that employees now possess. Simple jobs will become high-performance jobs that require workers to reason through complex processes rather than follow rote instructions or complete the discrete steps of larger processes. These workers will need higher-order information skills as a foundation for lifelong learning.

It is forecast that 80 percent of new jobs will require postsecondary education. Our educational system is falling far short of matching that requirement. As young Americans enter adulthood, only 42 percent have the skills to begin college work. Throughout the country, businesses report underskilled workers and shortages of competent job applicants. They have pressured Congress to allow the importation of 300,000 highly skilled foreign workers each year to fill jobs for which Americans are not prepared.

Changing Demography. As the United States grows older, its population grows more diverse. By the year 2050, the nation will be nearly half minority, and the shift will be most dramatic among youth. For education, these changes are profound. Poverty has the highest correlation with educational underpreparation, and minorities, especially immigrants, have disproportionately high poverty rates. Tragically, at a time when schools are struggling to raise learning expectations, a greater number of less prepared young people will begin school.

Ethnicity is not the only demographic force at work, however. The graying of America will be equally important. Today, we are experiencing the impact of the post-World War II baby boom as 76 million Americans prepare to retire. Through 2030, the number of Americans in their prime work years is expected to remain constant at 160 million, while the number of individuals over 65 will increase from 33.5 million to 69.3 million. To support the growing elderly population, all Americans in their prime work years must be highly skilled and increasingly productive.

Lack of Progress for Minorities. Minorities have made some educational progress in recent years, but the achievement gap between minority and majority students is still troubling. Among Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and white non-Hispanic Americans, for example, Hispanic Americans comprise approximately 14 percent of the 15- to 19-year-old population, but they earn only 7 percent of the associate degrees and 6 percent of the bachelor's degrees. African Americans are approximately 16 percent of the 15- to 19-year-old population, but earn only 10 percent of the associate degrees and 9 percent of the bachelor's degrees. White non-Hispanics comprise 70 percent of the 15- to 19-year-old population and earn 83 percent of the associate degrees and 86 percent of the bachelor's degrees. Hispanic Americans and African Americans lose ground at every step of the educational ladder, from high school graduation and college enrollment to earning degrees and certificates. These results are unacceptable. They are contrary to America's fundamental goals and represent a great loss of talent that our nation desperately needs.

The Need for Education Reform. With the recent aggressive efforts in many states, the school reform movement, which began in the 1980s, is finally showing some progress. The current Bush administration and Congressional initiatives will provide additional momentum; however, the task of preparing all young Americans for universal access to postsecondary education is monumental. Even with reform, our secondary schools will not be able to do it all. Currently, only 64 percent of youth earn a standard high school diploma (another 18 percent earn an alternate diploma at an average age of 25) and a significant gap exists between current high school graduation standards and the competencies needed to begin college. Given the projected demographic changes, if there are no improvements in the schools, the 42 percent of young Americans who possess the competencies to begin college work will decrease to 33 percent.

A Path to Success: Community College Developmental Education

The evolving educational pattern is a continuum that includes college entry. Four of five Americans will need some postsecondary education and most will return for upgrading, retraining, or personal growth. The majority will enroll in community colleges. Nearly half of all entering community college students have some basic skills deficiency. Community college enrollment will skyrocket and even more students will lack academic preparation. They will depend on community college developmental education as the lifeline to their future.

Results for Underprepared Students. Although the majority of underprepared students are white non-Hispanics, two-thirds of the seriously academically deficient are minorities; nearly half are 24 years of age or older. The nature of deficiencies is dramatic: one-third are deficient in all basic areas, one-third in two of the three basic areas, and one-third in only one area. Approximately half of the academically deficient students successfully complete remediation. Those who succeed do as well in standard college classes as those who began without deficiencies. One-sixth earn academic associate and baccalaureate degrees and one-third earn occupational associate degrees and certificates. Successfully remediated students become constructive contributors to society. Ten years after beginning developmental courses, 98 percent are employed and 90 percent are in above minimal level jobs. Nearly two-thirds are in new technical and office careers-the areas of greatest growth. They commit less than one-third the number of felonies than other Americans with similar demographics. Half are continuing their education.

Cost of Developmental Education Programs. Contrary to common belief, developmental education programs are cost effective. They serve one million students a year and successfully remediate half that number for an expenditure of only one percent of the national higher education budget and four percent of federal student financial aid. The average academically deficient student enrolls in developmental courses for the equivalent of approximately one-fourth of an academic year. In a community college with an annual FTE cost of $6,000 and student fees at 25 percent of cost, the public cost per student for remediation would be $1,125. Considering the constructive futures of successfully remediated students, the cost and benefit are exceptional.

Meeting Student Needs. Developmental programs are frequently given a low priority by both legislatures and colleges and are typically underfunded. As productive as these

programs are, they should and can be successful with more students. To succeed, academically deficient students need personal support, which requires more resources than standard college course work. The community colleges that are most successful have integrated programs involving classes, counseling, learning laboratories, and other support services. In addition, they work closely with secondary schools to increase the percentage of entering students who are academically prepared.

Mandatory assessment and mandatory placement are essential. Students must have the appropriate competencies for the classes in which they enroll. Permitting students to enroll in classes for which they are underprepared results in high rates of failure or decreased expectations at the expense of college standards. For this reason, developmental education is essential to achieving college excellence. These services prepare half of our students for academic success and permit colleges to establish and maintain high standards. Dramatically stated, the students who will enroll in developmental education courses are not only half of the students entering college, they are half of America's future high-skill workforce.

What Can Community College Trustees and Presidents Do?

Excellent developmental education programs exist only in colleges where a priority is clearly established by the trustees and the president. Trustees and presidents can take several important steps toward ensuring a focus on strong, effective developmental education programs at their institutions:

- Gain an understanding of the role of community college developmental and remedial education,
  including the reasons these programs are needed, the costs and benefits of these programs, and the contributions these programs make to our society.

- Support developmental education as a priority for the institution. Quality developmental programs
  exist only where the board and president are clearly supportive in words and deeds.

- Be sure that your college establishes close working relationships with the K-12 school system,
  particularly assisting with programs designed to prepare students for college.

- Help members of your community understand the function and importance of developmental
  education programs.

- Advocate to your legislators for appropriate support and policies.

- Be well informed and knowledgeable about the college developmental education program.

- By board policy, state a clear position in support of the developmental education program.

America has no one to waste. Our nation's future depends upon communities recognizing the importance of developmental education and raising it to the priority it needs and deserves. Community college trustees and presidents can begin this process at their own institutions, thereby ensuring that members of their communities have opportunities to thrive in a vibrant economy rather than stagnate in a desolate wasteland.

Robert H. McCabe is a Senior League Fellow, League for Innovation in the Community College. He directed the National Study of Community College Remedial Education, a League project in conjunction with the American Association of Community Colleges and with assistance from the Education Commission of the States. The project was supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts, and the final report, No One to Waste, is available from AACC. This abstract is derived from the findings of this study.

Volume 14, Number 1
February 2001

Cynthia Wilson, Editor in Chief

Leadership Abstracts

April 2001 Volume 14, Number 2

AN OPEN DOOR TO THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Kenneth P. Walker

Community colleges have made their mark by providing high-quality, open access to higher education, a democratization of learning resulting in the development of nearly 1,200 community and technical colleges across the U.S. During the one hundred years since the first junior college was founded, the broader community college mission has expanded from singular focus on university transfer to include technical and vocational education, basic skills training, and, most recently, workforce development. At each stage, we have adapted, added, or merged our programs and services to meet the changing needs of our communities. As our institutions go about identifying community needs today, our surveys and focus groups show that in addition to the increasing need for basic skills and short-cycle training and certification, many of our constituents are interested in earning baccalaureate degrees. Significantly, they are not always interested in, or capable of transferring to, traditional baccalaureate colleges and universities; rather, they seek to earn this degree at their local community colleges. Given this recurrent finding, particularly in light of a convergence of socioeconomic trends outlined in the following sections, now might be the time for us to again expand the community college movement by dismantling local, state, and federal barriers to an increasingly vital learning option: the bachelor's degree in applied arts and sciences.

The Need for Change: Community College Baccalaureate

Widespread access to higher education is critical to the economic health and social welfare of the nation. With increasing demands for access and affordability, expanding the community college mission to include baccalaureate degrees while retaining our open-door philosophy and responsiveness to local needs is a logical option in many communities. Using the existing community college infrastructure-the facilities, faculty, staff, and programs already in place at convenient locations-to meet higher education needs makes good economic sense. In addition, nearly half of all undergraduates attending public higher education institutions are enrolled in community colleges; many would like to complete their baccalaureate degrees at those colleges. Indeed, in a recent survey of Edison Community College (FL) students, 80 percent of respondents said they would like to complete their baccalaureate degree at Edison. Their reasons included accessibility, convenient location, and lower costs.

By adding baccalaureate degrees to our offerings, community colleges can help promote (a) increased geographical, financial, and academic access to upper division education; (b) cost efficiencies through the use of existing infrastructures; (c) success among nontraditional or returning students through smaller classes, less rigid sequencing, and greater scheduling options; (d) ready matriculation and upward mobility for students with associate degrees; (e) stable family and employment relationships for students while they complete their degrees; (f)

community college commitment to economic and workforce development; and (g) responsiveness to community needs for specialized programs.

Trends Influencing Higher Education

As community colleges begin contemplating the applied bachelor's degree, the following trends influencing higher education are of particular relevance:

- *Changes in the Marketplace.* The marketplace for higher education has become international. The World Wide Web enables colleges and universities to enroll students from anywhere in the world. A revised community college mission that includes responsiveness to the demands and challenges of the new globally competitive economy would help community colleges reshape our identity to survive and thrive in the 21st century. This revision may be particularly prudent given the growing presence of competing education providers--charter colleges, e-colleges, broker colleges, proprietary colleges, and private nonprofit colleges.
- *Changes in Student Profiles.* Since only a small percentage of students attend community colleges for two years, our institutions can justifiably discard the restrictive, outdated term two-year college. The majority of students in higher education are older, attend part-time, and are employed. These students have families, jobs, mortgages, and other demands on their time. They want convenience, good treatment, and 24-hour availability of instruction and service.
- *Changes in Employer Needs.* The baccalaureate degree is replacing the associate degree as the entry-level credential for well-paying jobs. As learner demand for the baccalaureate degree increases, community colleges are in a natural position to serve that need. Students must acquire an increasing volume of knowledge and skills and develop the ability to think critically and solve complex problems-knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in associate degree programs and improved by education and experience gained in baccalaureate programs.
- *Changes in Education.* The demand for open access to educational options is being met by the 21st century community college, characterized by its movement toward becoming more learning centered. As community colleges compete with new world colleges and universities that have no boundaries and offer new brand names, new educational companies, and more choices for students, we must create our own new products and delivery systems. In our institutions, this created climate includes a variety of programs to meet the diverse needs of students and community. Increasingly, the community college baccalaureate has a place in this climate.

Meeting the Challenges

Adapting for Success. In this environment, the competition for learners will be won by the most successfully adaptive colleges, those most sensitive to socioeconomic changes. To remain relevant in the 21st century, the community college can go beyond simply doing differently the same things we have always done, rethinking instead the reasons for our existence, the competition and our attitude toward it, the complexity of the modern world which needs our services, the markets for our services, and the leadership which will determine the role of the

community college in the new century. While students are demanding increased degree opportunity, the cost of higher education is escalating more rapidly than the cost of living, and universities are elevating admission requirements and limiting enrollment. With relatively low tuition and fees and core values of open access, responsiveness to community needs, emphasis on teaching and learning, and student-centeredness, the community college is a logical and cost effective option for meeting the rising demand for the baccalaureate degree.

In a knowledge age society with a premium on intellectual capital, a nation failing to maintain its educational excellence will also fail to maintain its economic and social advantage. Knowledge and information will likely expand more in the next hundred years than during the past thousand years. With this expansion of knowledge comes the requirement that our educational systems change in dramatic ways to remain relevant. If we are to have an educated globally competitive populace, we must address the current problems of rising demand, limited access, and increasing costs by expanding the community college mission to include the baccalaureate degree.

Facing the Critics. Critics of this concept will talk about competition with universities and a fear that community colleges will forgo their core values. However, the same critics may omit from their discussions the needs and demands of students, and the desire of business and industry for well-educated employees. Community colleges have made their mark by providing high-quality, open access to higher education, a democratization of learning resulting in the development of nearly 1,200 community and technical colleges across the U.S. During the one hundred years since the first junior college was founded, the broader community college mission has expanded from singular focus on university transfer to include technical and vocational education, basic skills training, and, most recently, workforce development. At each stage, we have adapted, added, or merged our programs and services to meet the changing needs of our communities. As our institutions go about identifying community needs today, our surveys and focus groups show that in addition to the increasing need for basic skills and short-cycle training and certification, many of our constituents are interested in earning baccalaureate degrees. Significantly, they are not always interested in, or capable of transferring to, traditional baccalaureate colleges and universities; rather, they seek to earn this degree at their local community colleges. Given this recurrent finding, particularly in light of a convergence of socioeconomic trends outlined in the following sections, now might be the time for us to again expand the community college movement by dismantling local, state, and federal barriers to an increasingly vital learning option: the bachelor's degree in applied arts and sciences.

Meeting the Need: Community College Baccalaureate Association

In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas L. Friedman writes about the globalization of technology, finance, and information. We in community colleges would add education to his list of critical elements of power undergoing radical transformation. By expanding the community college mission to include the baccalaureate degree, we continue our practice of meeting the needs of our constituents, and we contribute to the democratization of the baccalaureate degree. Several states, including Arkansas, Nevada, Utah, New York, Florida, Hawaii, Oregon, and Pennsylvania, have already authorized the community college baccalaureate degree. To promote the concept, the Community College Baccalaureate Association was founded with a vision that baccalaureate degree access and opportunity should be available to all who can benefit from it.

Such a vision calls for the further democratization of higher education by making access to the baccalaureate degree available through the open-door colleges of the world. The association now has 63 members, from 21 states, 5 Canadian provinces, and 2 Caribbean Island states. The baccalaureate movement has grown from a concept to a reality, helping redefine the community college for the 21st century.

Kenneth P. Walker is District President of Edison Community College (FL).
Volume 14, Number 2
April 2001
Mark Milliron, Editor
Cynthia Wilson, Editor in Chief
Bob Eggers, Managing Editor

Leadership Abstracts

June 2001 Volume 14, Number 3

BROTHER-TO-BROTHER: ENHANCING THE INTELLECTUAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES

Edward J. Leach

Community colleges have established a strong reputation for fulfilling their mission to encourage and provide wide access to higher education, especially for underrepresented and disadvantaged citizens. Building on this record, some community colleges are achieving still more success by initiating programs that focus on specific underrepresented groups, helping students and potential students overcome class and social barriers that can impede academic participation and achievement. Brother-to-Brother, initiated as a special program at St. Petersburg College (FL) in 1998, helps African-American males identify and overcome common and significant stumbling blocks on an often difficult path toward college entrance and academic success.

O Brother, Where Art Thou?

College enrollment and degree attainment rates of African-American males continue to rise steadily. Even so, the absence and lack of success of these men is more pronounced than in any other student group. Recent studies such as the October 2000, American Council on Education's "Gender Equity in Higher Education: Are Male Students at a Disadvantage?" outline a noticeable disparity. The rate of attrition among African-American males is disproportionately high and degree completion is disproportionately low. Why these males as a group are more challenged in postsecondary education than other groups, including African-American women, merits closer scrutiny.

Outside the classroom, in larger society, African-American males often confront significant challenges. In 1994, W. H. Courtenay reported that they have the lowest life expectancy and highest mortality rate of all gender and ethnic groups in the U.S. and have higher mortality rates than African-American females for all of the ten leading causes of death except diabetes. For the general college-age population (15 to 24 years old), three out of every four deaths are male, but for African-Americans, five out of six deaths in this age group are male. The death rate for college age African-American males is nearly twice that of college-age white males.

Despite a decline in violent crime rates nationwide, African-American males have a high likelihood of being murdered, and this is not a new phenomenon. Fifteen years ago D.F. Hawkins (Homicide Among Black Americans) noted that African-American males were more than five times as likely to be the victims of homicide as their white counterparts. For African-American males between ages 15 and 34, homicide is the leading cause of death, and since 1960, the suicide rate for African-American males between ages 15 and 24 has reportedly tripled.

America's incarceration policies have had disproportionate impact on young African-American males, resulting in high rates of imprisonment and disenfranchisement. Ziedenberg and Schiraldi (Punishing Decade: Prison and Jail Estimates at the Millennium) report that one in three African-

American males between the ages of 20 and 29 are in prison, on parole, or on probation. An African-American male born in 1991 stands a 29% chance of being imprisoned at some point in his life, compared to 4% for a white male born that year.

The Classroom Challenge

Inside the classroom, African-American males often experience insufficient high school preparation and lower overall mean academic achievement. The overall mean achievement scores for African-American male high school students are below those of all other groups in the basic subject areas. African-American males are much more likely to be placed in classes for students with learning disabilities than in gifted and talented classes, and are far more likely to be placed in general education and vocational curricular tracks than in college-bound tracks. These circumstances are quantified in the 1997 Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute finding that 91% of white women, 89% of white males, and 87% of African-American women receive high school diplomas, while only 79% of African-American males receive high school diplomas. Additionally, African-American males are found to be suspended from school more frequently and for longer periods of time than other student groups.

These academic and social factors also help predict which groups attend college. For example, according to the same Patterson finding, more African-American women than African-American men enroll in postsecondary education-66% versus 53%. Generally, as family income level increases, the gender gap reverses itself in favor of males, except in the case of African-Americans. For African-Americans students, there is reportedly a considerable gender gap even among upper-income students enrolling in postsecondary education, with African-American males again falling on the short side of the gap.

Entrance into college and subsequent academic success comes most easily for students who have adequate preparation, receive encouragement about their capabilities, enroll in the appropriate classes, and receive financial and other support as needed. To better their chances, African-American males, like all students, need to be made aware of available opportunities and prevailing obstacles, and they may need assistance in employing this knowledge to good effect-knowledge that can come from the focused support of faculty and staff.

Brother-to-Brother at St. Petersburg College

Many colleges and universities are making special efforts not only to identify and monitor the admission of African-American males, but also to provide, before and after admission, special support services designed to retain them as students through graduation. At St. Petersburg College, the Brother-to-Brother program helps African-American males, many of whom are first-generation college students, recognize and act upon factors that cause them to be academically and socially at risk. Brother-to-Brother began with internal college program development and student activity funding, but now benefits from wider individual, community, and corporate support. First implemented by the author of this abstract, then Provost of Special Programs, and coordinated by George Carbart, Brother-to-Brother supports and encourages academic success through high levels of involvement in college life and through positive interactions with college faculty and staff.

Brother-to-Brother provides African-American males with opportunities to develop a rich and complete understanding and appreciation of themselves and promotes their active involvement in their development as responsible citizens. Program participants learn to deal with adversity and to avoid detours as they pursue their academic and social goals. Structured program activities help build a level of consciousness that motivates academic and social development. Brother-to-Brother also enhances and nurtures the positive development of African-American males in relation to others in their community by helping students build positive relationships and appropriately resolve conflicts.

Brother-to-Brother is designed so that staff, faculty, administrators, and students work together to identify and share resources. To extend and conserve program resources whenever possible and practical, services and activities are provided in conjunction with other student support programs, and referrals are made to other college resources. With extended office hours to accommodate students' complex lives, Brother-to-Brother provides a variety of academic and student services such as assessment, early registration, priority scheduling, peer support, and tutoring. Enrichment activities encourage and enhance intellectual and personal growth, and a computerized tracking system enables strict monitoring of academic progress, with extra assistance available for those who fall behind.

The Campus and Beyond

Students in St. Petersburg College's Brother-to-Brother program have opportunities to experience concerts, films, and other activities that reflect, celebrate, and motivate African-American males. Additionally, the program offers career planning activities, such as field trips to businesses operated by African Americans, and community service activities such as voter registration drives. Each month Brother-to-Brother hosts a luncheon seminar centering on a topic that directly and routinely affects African-American males, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, or coping skills. The program also assists students with the financial aid process and offers some direct financial aid to participants.

To encourage wide societal integration, Brother-to-Brother advocates frequent connection and collaboration with fellow students through study groups and other activities. Collaborative activities with local schools and community organizations provide opportunities for program participants to mentor younger students and serve as role models, helping the next generation of African-American males become better prepared for college.

Community colleges today actively continue a long tradition of providing open educational opportunities for their students and potential students. Brother-to-Brother is a model and a method for further enhancing this tradition, extending a nurturing and guiding hand to an underrepresented group in need of assistance. Brother-to-Brother guides African-American male participants in establishing a clear and realistic understanding of their role as adults. Brother-to-Brother coaches, mentors, and directs program participants along paths of self-exploration, improvement, and development. The result is that participants desire to excel academically and socially through an increase in their expectations and academic skills. They gain greater confidence in themselves, their community, and the education system.

Colleges are more effective in attracting, accepting, and retaining underrepresented African-American males when they learn more about the formidable hurdles this group often faces in our society and then launch programs tailored to create positive opportunities and experiences for these students. The Brother-to-Brother program raises awareness among student participants about positive societal interactions, options, and opportunities; equally important, it also raises the awareness of faculty and staff about the value of a focused supportive environment in fostering educational success for all students.

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Volume 14, Number 3
June 2001
Mark Milliron, Editor

Leadership Abstracts

August 2001 Volume 14, Number 4

BUILDING ON YOUR FOUNDATION

Brenda Babitz

We are fortunate to live in a country long recognized as the world leader in philanthropy. With projections of a wealth transfer in the United States for the next 20 years that will exceed 40 trillion dollars, it's time to gather our collective resources and put some of this new wealth to work for America's community colleges. And although this opportunity to involve corporations, foundations, and individuals in the compelling mission of our colleges is without precedent, so too, are the challenges we must confront.

The quest for private support at the community college level is a relatively new phenomenon, born of the ever-widening gap between what public funds support and what quality education and training now demand. Therefore, one prerequisite task is simply to get our case for support on the giving agenda of corporations, foundations, and individuals who view funding for community-based education and training as the province of state and local governments alone. The stakes are high and our message must be clear: To assure the levels of access and instructional quality needed to maintain America's skilled work force and, by extension, our nation's competitive edge, we must increase private sector investment in public higher education. Indeed, we have an obligation to succeed.

Advancement: An Institutionwide Responsibility

To ensure that this obligation is fulfilled, the successful advancement program develops clearly defined roles for each segment of the college family including faculty, staff, and students, but the major responsibilities remain in the hands of the trustees, the president, the chief advancement officer, and the foundation board.

Trustees. As the governing body, trustees have traditionally held responsibility for fiscal planning and policies at the highest level. Faced with a need for resources beyond those funded by public sector budgets each year, today's trustees are encouraged to explore and develop new sources of revenue, first authorizing creation of an institutionally related foundation and then approving the foundation's long-range plans, supporting its activities, and acting as its public advocates.

Monroe Community College trustee Lori Van Dusen understands and supports this expanded role: "With our opportunity to provide the college not simply oversight but also new, much-needed financial strength and flexibility, trustees can have a more pronounced and far-reaching influence on campus life and learning than ever before."

The President. Serving as the central link between trustees and the foundation, the college president works to assure that relationships between these groups are dynamic and synergistic, reflecting mutual respect and a clear understanding of shared and distinctive responsibilities. All

these relationships should be clarified in writing, with fundraising policies adopted by mutual consent and long-range plans implemented only with governing board approval.

As the guiding hand and voice for the institution, the college president is also the campus's most vital and visible fundraising presence. The successful president develops an institutional vision that is forward-looking and sustainable, ensures that the chief advancement officer is well-qualified, maintains strong ties with the foundation board, understands the development process, cultivates and solicits major gift prospects, and attends foundation-sponsored activities.

The Chief Advancement Officer (CAO). The CAO, often the foundation director, makes this all work. As a member of the college's senior management team, the CAO actively participates in institutional strategic planning. With support from the college in the form of personnel and resources, the college's CAO works with the foundation board to develop and implement fundraising policies, programs, and strategies that benefit the institution. The CAO takes the lead in identifying, recruiting, training, and effectively utilizing each member of the foundation's volunteer board; overseeing both annual and long-range planning; motivating staff and volunteers; evaluating programs and human resources; and following up on a myriad of details to help the foundation succeed.

The Foundation Board. Community college foundations, established as not-for-profit corporations that solicit, receive, and disburse private funds, derive their authority and legitimacy from the institutions with which they are affiliated. A successful development program requires the foundation to balance its autonomy with an appropriate degree of accountability to the governing board.

In earlier years, community college foundation boards were socially oriented, with few members experienced in the dynamics of fundraising. Board giving itself was insubstantial; so, too, was the capacity of most board members to cultivate prospects or solicit contributions of a meaningful size. In those years, however, state and local funding was adequate, and contributions from the private sector, while welcomed, were rarely needed.

By contrast, today's highly competitive philanthropic environment demands board members who are strongly committed to the institution, a commitment manifest in their own leadership-level generosity and their willingness to advise the governing board, college president, and chief advancement officer; become knowledgeable about the college and its mission; act as ambassadors for the college; identify, cultivate, and solicit potential donors within the private sector; lead by example, personally investing in the college and its programs; participate in board meetings; host foundation-sponsored events and activities; recommend and cultivate prospective board nominees; and assist in carrying out the board's fiduciary responsibility.

The challenge for college presidents and advancement officers is not only finding individuals who possess these skills and attributes, but also recruiting them, retaining their interest, and making best use of their individual strengths and abilities.

The Foundation's Pivotal Role

Understandably, the influence and effectiveness of a foundation board begins with the reputation, capabilities, and commitment of its members. Although every rule has exceptions, experience teaches that effective board members most often share one or more of the following characteristics: inherited wealth, a tradition of public service, high-level of corporate or professional achievement, and a leadership role in the community. A relationship with the institution, either personal or corporate, is always desirable.

To be productive, the foundation must have a viable plan and structure for board activities. This framework encourages the development of strong leadership and shared goals, and it provides the opportunity for the CAO to engage the talents and interests of each member to best advantage. To strengthen a board, the CAO must give high priority to developing effective recruitment, orientation, and retention activities; identifying skills and attributes; determining meaningful committee assignments; developing effective communications; building relationships; and following sound board practices.

Working to validate the case for their institution, recruit volunteer leadership, build new donor constituencies, and develop fresh revenue streams, community college foundations play an increasingly pivotal role in funding the college's current needs and long-term aspirations. But success has its building blocks: notably, a motivated president, a strongly committed foundation board, a comprehensive fundraising plan that effectively integrates the foundation's mission with that of the college, and an advancement program that both appreciates and capitalizes on the character of its community.

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Volume 14, Number 4
August 2001
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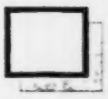

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